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HANDLING INDICATOR

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TO Department of State

TAGS: PINS, GT

EO 11652: XGDS 2

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FROM Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE 14 Jan 75

SUBJECT Internal Security: Monthly Report of Incidents of Political Violence, December 1974

REF

SUMMARY: The number of press-reported incidents of political violence increased only slightly during December, but the importance of the incidents increased markedly. Terrorists of the left and right were busy during the month, carrying out at least four major kidnappings. One PGT-initiated kidnapping turned into a fiasco for the PGT, which lost not only its secretary general, but also two important lieutenants.

the Andrés Botrán kidnapping, which brought in a record \$500,000 ransom, remains unsolved. END SUMMARY.

I. Statistics. Although the number of press-reported incidents of political violence showed only a slight increase during December, up to 40 from November's record low of 37, their political significance increased markedly. The 13 attributed incidents (33% of the total number) included 2 by the PGT, 2 by rightist terrorists, and 9 by the GOG. December's action was concentrated mostly in Guatemala City, where 22 incidents (55% of the total) took place. All of the attributed incidents occurred in Guatemala City. Of the 21 persons killed during December, 8 showed signs of having been tortured. December's victims included the secretary general of the PGT (killed), the PGT's two top operations lieutenants (killed), an independent guerrilla (killed), two campesino labor activists (kidnapped), three industrialists (kidnapped), and one prominent lawyer (kidnapped).

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FORM DS-323

POL:DCJohnson:mjf

POL:GFJones

POL-I:WThomas

DAO:Col. McTaggart

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <i>Car</i>	DATE <i>001</i>
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED	

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II. Attributed Incidents

To the Left. The PGT, which had been very quiet for the last three months, tried to carry out a major operation in December, but it turned into a fiasco. Party members captured wealthy industrialist Roberto Gabriel Abularach December 5 and held him for \$60,000 ransom. Police managed to crack the case, however, and after Gabriel's December 20 release trailed suspects to a house. When police moved in to make arrests, they were met by gunfire, so 500 army troops were called in as reinforcements. The shooting lasted nearly an hour, according to press reports. When the shooting stopped, one guerrilla was discovered dead in the house, and three women were captured. [REDACTED] B1 EC

The following day, two other bodies were discovered. One was identified as PGT secretary general Huberto Alvarado Arellano, and the other was identified as Miguel Antonio Alvarado Lima. Both men had been tortured, had their hands tied behind their backs, and were riddled with bullets. [REDACTED] B1

The Gabriel case's aftermath shed light on a September 20 incident, in which a group of heavily armed persons had removed two convalescing patients from a Mazatanango hospital. Both of the persons taken from the hospital turned out to have been PGT members. One, a woman, was captured following the December 20 shootout. The other was killed.

A curious aspect of the Gabriel kidnapping was pointed out to us by [REDACTED] He said that Gabriel had been kidnapped once before and that since then he and other members of the local "Arab community" - families of Lebanese and Syrian descent - had been paying protection money to the PGT for years. [REDACTED] B1 EC B1 EC

To the Right. Two of December's 8 kidnappings were reportedly carried out by right-wing "gun-for-hire"

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terrorists. The two victims were textile factory owner José Antonio Gadala Maria and prominent lawyer Gustavo Cardona del Cid. The families of both men paid the ransoms demanded, \$50,000 each according to the press, and the men were released unharmed.

The deaths of PGT secretary general Huberto Alvarado and party member Miguel Antonio Alvarado Lima

had been killed by comrades. The newspaper El Gráfico did not believe the government's story. It came out with a very strong editorial (enclosure B) stating that the killings had "annulled many of the advances" made by the Laugerud administration in its first six months.

Comment: action against the PGT members dealt the party a serious, but only temporary blow. Huberto Alvarado's replacement as PGT secretary general is likely to be Joaquin Noval, a daring and action-prone PGT hardliner. The PGT has been hurt most by the loss of the two men who led the party's military operations in the rural and urban areas.

It remains unknown whether the party will attempt to lie low for a time and reorganize or whether it will take the risk of even greater losses by undertaking some form of retaliatory action. If the party takes the latter course, it will do so with the knowledge that it will receive no quarter from the Laugerud administration if the action fails. End comment.

III. Other Incidents. One of the biggest mysteries in Guatemala for the past few weeks has been the kidnapping of Andrés Botrán. Botrán, wealthy member of the rum-distilling family, was kidnapped outside the Conquistador

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Sheraton Hotel in Guatemala City on December 6. He was held for 25 days, and was not released until the family paid a \$500,000 ransom. The remarkable aspect of the incident, which was more carefully planned and executed than the Gabriel kidnapping, was the kidnappers' intransigence regarding the ransom amount - the kidnappers refused to budge from their initial demand for half a million dollars.

There has been much speculation regarding possible culprits.



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Two campesinos, both identified as sindicalistas, were kidnapped from their homes in La Democracia, Escuintla, December 25 by a group of heavily armed men. They have not been seen since.

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